(7)

Extracts.

John Brown to his "Dear Wife & Children"
(then living at Franklin Mills, Portage County, Ohio,)
dated "New Hartford, Ct. 23 Jan. 1839.

--- "I have felt distressed to get my business done, and return, ever since I left home; but know of no way consistent with duty but to make thorough work of it while there is any hope. Things now look more favourable than they have, but I may, still be disappointed. We must all try to trust in him who is very gracious & full of compassion and of almighty power; for those that do will not be made ashamed, Ezra the prophet prayed & afflicted himself before God, when himself and the captivity were in a straight, and I have no doubt you will join with me under similar circumstances. Don't get discouraged any of you, but hope in God, and try all to serve him with a perfect heart."

J. B. to his Wife & Children.
"Near Ripley, Virginia, 27 April 1840,

x x x " I like the country as well as I expected, and its inhabitants rather better; and I have seen the spot where, if it be the will of Providence, I hope one day to live with my family. x x x Were the inhabitants as resolute & industrious as the northern people, and did they understand how to manage as well, they would become rich, but they are not generally so. They seem to have no idea of improvement in their Cattle, Sheep, or Hogs, nor to know the use of enclosed pasture fields for their Stock,, but spend a large portion of their time in hunting for their Cattle, Sheep, & Horses, and the same habit continues from Father to Son. x x x By comparing them with the people of other parts of the country, I can see new & abundant proof that Knowledge is power. I think we might be very useful to them on many accounts, were we so disposed. May God in mercy keep us all, & enable us to get wisdom, and with all our getting or losing to get understanding. Affectionately Yours (signed) John Brown."

[His hand-writing is very firm, & distinct. Spelling I have ~~differed~~ altered in but 2 or 3 instances. He writes 'verry' for very, 'allmighty' which is perhaps better than 'almighty', 'loosing' for losing.]

[This extract following I give more for your own personal use, to show you the relative position of members of the famil and their feelings one to another, than for publication. - You are aware that his present wife is a second one.]

J. B. to his Wife.

"Springfield, 29th Nov. 1846.

"Dear Mary, * * * * Your letter dated the 20th wa received last night, and afforded me *a real* though a mor satisfaction. That you had received, or were to receive a let m either John, or Jason, I was in perfect ignorance of, till y formed me; and I am glad to learn that wholly uninfluen y me, they have shown a disposition to afford you all the com in your *deep affliction* which the nature of the case would a of. Nothing is scarcely equal with *me*, to the satisfacti of seeing that one portion of my *remaining* family are not disposed to exclude from their sympathies, & their warm affec another portion. I accept it as one of the most grateful returns that can be made to me, for any care or exertions my part to promote either their present or their future w being; and while I am able to discover such a feeling, I fe assured that notwithstanding God has chastised us *often* e; yet he has not *himself* entirely withdrawn from forsaken us *utterly*. The sudden & dreadful manner which he has seen fit to call *our dear little Kitty* to her leave of us, is I need not tell you how much on my m but before *Him*, I will bow my head in submission, a hold my peace. × × × × I have sailed over a somew stormy sea for nearly half a century, and have experi enough to teach me thoroughly that I may most reasonably buckle up and be prepared for the tempest. Mary let us t to maintain a cheerful self-command while we are tossi up and down, and let our motto still be Action, Action; as have but one life to live. * * * * I think Ruth promised write me again.

Affectionately Yours. (Signed) John Br

J. B. to J. B. Jr.

"London, 29th August 1849.

"Dear Son John, I reached Liverpool on Sabbath day the 26th Inst, and this place on the 27th at evening, a Debtor to Grace for health, and a very pleasant & quick passage. Have called on the Messrs. Pickersgill and find they have neither sold any wool nor offered any. They think that no time has yet been lost, and that a good sale can be effected. * * * England is a fine country so far as I have seen, but nothing so very *wonderful has yet appeared to me.* Their farming & Stone Masonry are very good. Cattle *generally* something more than middling good. Horses as seen at London, Liverpool, and through the fine country between those places; will bear no comparison with those of our Northern States *as an average.* I am here told that I must go to the Park to see the fine horses of England. * * * Their Hogs are generally good, and mutton sheep are almost everywhere fat as pork.

* * Since writing the above I find that it will be my best way to set out at once for the Continent, and expect to leave for Paris this evening. So farewell for this time now about 4 o'clock P. M. Your affectionate Father (Signed) John Brown"

[In sending the letter (or a copy of it) to his Mother-in-law, J. B. Jr. remarks, "You will see that he does not design to stop to write much poetry among the old Castle ruins of that country

J. B. to his Wife — then residing at North Elba, N. Y.

"Akron [Ohio] 22d Aug. 1850.

"Dear Wife, I returned last night from a journey of about three weeks through Pa., & Virginia & different parts of this State settling up the wool business. * * * I have now got nearly through settling with those who have money coming to them; but do not know when I shall be done with some that owe us. My health has been good as yet; notwithstanding I have again been more or less amidst sickness & death

"* * * I can give no particular instructions about the busi at home except to have the boys collect, and lay up in the be manner they can, all the stuff for wintering the stock wel either in the form of feed or bedding. Ruth wrote for me to bring some Morocco which I will endeavor to do. I hope all of you will bear in mind the shortness and the great uncertainty of life. * * I want very much to see those little girls, and say to them that Father's hair begins to need cutting again. Your Affectionate Husband, (Signed) John Brown"

J. B. to his Wife.

"Springfield, Mass. Nov. 28th 1850.

"Dear Wife, * * * Since leaving home I have thought that under all the circumstances of doubt attending the time of o removal; and the possiblity that we may not remove at all; that I had, perhaps encouraged the Boys to feed out the Potato too freely. * * * I want to have them very careful to have Hay, or Straw wasted; but I would have them use enough Straw for Bedding the Cattle to keep them from lying in the mire. I heard from Ohio a few days since, all were then well. It now seems that the Fugitive Slave Law was to be the Means of making more abolitionists than all the lectu we have had for years. It really looks as if God had his and on this wickedness also. I of course keep encouragi my colored friends to "trust in Good [?God], and keep their Powder dry." I did so today at Thanksgiving Meeting publi * * * While here, and at almost all places where I stop, I am treated with all kindness & attention; but it all does not make home. I feel lonely & restless no matter how neat and comfortable my room & bed, nor how richly loaded may be the table; they have very few charms for me, away from home I can look back to our Log Cabin at the Centre of Richfield with a supper of Porridge, & Johnny Cake, [Corn Meal Cake] as to a place of far more interest to me, than the Massasoit [Hotel] of Springfield. But "there's Mercy in every place."

[His hand-writing is very firm, & distinct. Spelling I have altered in but 2 or 3 instances. He writes 'verry' for very, 'allmighty' which is perhaps better than 'almighty', 'loosing' for losing.]

MS. B.1.6 v.1 p.7

(7)

J. B. to his Wife.

"Springfield, Mass. 17th Jan. 1851.

"Dear Wife; * * * Since the sending off to Slavery of Long from New York I have improved my leisure hours quite busily with colored people here in advising them how to act, and in giving them all the encouragement in my power. They very much need encouragement, and advice, and some of them are so alarmed that they tell me they cannot sleep on account of either themselves, or their Wives, & Children. I can only say I think I have been enabled to do something to revive their broken spirits. I want all my family to immagine themselves in the same dreadful condition. My only spare time being taken up (often till late hours at night), in the way I speak of, has prevented me from the gloomy, homesick, feelings which had before so much oppressed me; not that I forget my family at all. * * * I wrote Owen last week that if he had not the means on hand to buy a little Sugar, to write Mr. Cutting of Westport to send out some. I conclude you have got your Belt before this. I could not manage to send the Slates for the Boys as I intended, so they must be provided for some other way. * * Say to the little Girls that I will run home the first chance I get; but I want to have them learn to be a little more still. May God in Infinite Mercy bless and keep you all, is the unceasing prayers of Your Affectionate Husband John Brown"

J. B. to his Wife; [Again At Akron, Summit Co, Ohio,

"Boston, Mass. 22d Decemb. 1851.

"Dear Mary, * * * * * There is an unusual amount of "very interesting things happening in this, & other countries at present, "and no one can foresee what is yet to follow: the great excitement produced by the coming of Kossuth, and the last news of a new revolution in France, with the prospe that all Europe will soon again be in a blaze, seem to have taken all by surprise. I have only to say in regard to those things, I rejoice in them; from the full belief that God is carrying out his Eternal purpose in them all. I hope the boys will be particularly carefu to have no waste of any kind of feed; for I am strongly impressed with the idea, that a long severe winter is before us."

J. B. to his wife,

"Utica, N.Y., 27th Decem. 1852."

***" I seem to be pretty much over the effects of the Ague except as to my sight which is some impaired; and which will not probably ever become much better. I made a short visit to North Elba, and left them all we and very comfortable, one week ago to-day. *** The colored families appear to be doing well, and to feel encouraged. They all send much love to you. They ha constant preaching on the Sabbath; and intelligence, morality, & religion appear to be all on the advance. Ou old neighbours appear to wish us back. I can give no particular instructions to the Boys, except to take the best of care of everything; not forgetting their own present, & eternal good. If any young Calves come, that ar nice ones, I want them to be well looked after, and if any very mean ones, I would have them killed awa. I am much pleased to get so good an account from the boys; and from Anne, & Sarah. Tell them that Henry [Thompson, his son-in-law] has cut my hair; & that Ruth ha sent them, as well as you, & Mrs. Perkins, some nice Maple Sug

[Copies continued] 7 S.L.

J. B. to his Wife. – [at Akron, Ohio.]

"Boston, Mass. 7th Jan. 1853.

"Dear Wife, I have this moment received your welcome letter of the 2d. Inst. I am very glad of all the good news it contains, (viz) that you are all well; and that the Stock appear to be on the "upper side of the hill". Also I am much gratified to learn that Anne, & Sarah are trying to assist you about the housework. I am *so much* pleased with this, that I have boght *for them* "Uncle Tom's Cabin" *to live in* after I get home. I am again disappointed by having the Court put off our trial here until the 13th of this month,‡ [‡the trial related to transactions in Wool. S. M. jr] – which will detain me until the 20th or maybe longer, This happens on account of the Sickness of the Mother of Rufus Choate. I suppose if the Mothers of all the parties connected with the defence had been *dieing* that such an excuse for not going to trial would have been laughed at, by the Court. * * * I really hope the Boys will be able to keep all the Sheep, & Cattle, on the *top* of the Hill (I mean, in condition.) * * *

Write often. Your Affectionate Husband John Brown,"

J. B. to his Wife,

"Boston, Mass. 16th Jany. 1853.

"Dear Wife I have the satisfaction to say that we have at last got to *trial*; and that I now hope that a little more than another week; will terminate it. Up to this time our prospects

appear favourable. * * * I have no word for the boys except to say I am very glad to hear they are doing so well; & that every day increases my anxiety that they all will decide to be wise & good; & I close by saying that such is by far my most earnest desire for you all. Your affectionate Husband
John Brown."

J. B. to his Wife, &c. [at North Elba, N.Y.]

"Syracuse 28th June 1855.

"Dear Wife; & Children I reached here on the first day, of the Convention, & I have reason to bless God that I came; for I have met with a most warm reception from all so far as I know; &, except by a few sincere, honest, Peace friends, a most hearty approval of my intention of Arming My Sons, & other friends in Kansas. I received to-day donations amounting to a little over Sixty Dollars, – $20. from Gerrit Smith, $5. from an old British Officer. Others giving smaller sums with such earnest, & affectionate expressions of their good wishes as did me more good than money even. John's 2 letters were introduced, & read, with such effect by Gerrit Smith, as to draw tears from numerous eyes in the great collection of people present. The convention has been one of the most interesting meetings I ever attended in my life; & I made a great addition to the number of warm hearted & honest friends. I would have given anything to have had you all present to witness these scenes. * * *
Your affectionate Husband & Father John Brown".

sent them, as well as you, & Mrs. Perkins, some nice Map

J. B. to his family. [Letter copied entire.]

"Osawatamie, Kansas Territory, 23d Nov. 1855

"Dear Wife & Children; All Ruth's letter to Henry saying she was about moveing, & dated 23d Oct. (I think,) was received by last week's Mail. We were all glad to learn again of your welfare; & as to your all staying in One House, I can see no possible objection if you can only be well agreed; & try to make each other as comfortable as may be. Nothing new of account has occurred amongst us since I wrote. Henry, Jason, & Oliver, are unable to do much yet; but appear to have but little Ague now. The others are all getting Middling well. We have got both Families so sheltered that they need not suffer hereafter; have got part of the Hay (which had lain in Cocks) secured; made some progress in preparation to build a House for John & Owen; & Salmon has caught a Prairie Wolf in the Steel trap. We continue to have a good deal of cold stormy weather - Rains with severe winds, & forming into Ice as they fall; together with cold nights, that freeze the ground considerably. Still God has not "forsaken us", & we get "day by day our dayly Bread"; & I wish we all had a great deal more of gratitude to mingle with our undeserved blessings. Much suffering would be avoided by people settling in Kansas, were they aware that they would need plenty of warm clothing, & tight warm houses as much as in New Hampshire or Vermont; for such is the fact. Since Watson wrote I have felt a good deal troubled about your prospect of a cold House to winter in; and since I wrote last I have thought of a cheap ready way to help it much at any rate. Take any common straight-edged boards; & run them from the ground up to the Eaves, barn fashion; not driving the nails in so far but that they may easily be drawn, - covering all but Doors & Windows as close as may be in that way; & breaking joints if need be. This can be done by any one; & in any weather not very Seve & the Boards may afterwards be mostly saved for other use I think much too of your kind of Widowed state; & I sometimes allow myself to dream a little of again someti enjoying the comforts of Home; but I do not dare to dream much. May God abundantly reward all your sacrifice for the cause of Humanity; and a Thousand fold more than compensate your lack of Worldly connections. We have received Two Newspapers you sent us, which wer indeed a rich treat; shut away as we are from the means of getting the news of the day. Should you continue to direct them to some of the Boys, after reading, w shall prize them much. Your Affectionate Husband

& Father "John Brown."

J. B. to his Family.

"Osawatamie, Kansas Territory, 1st Feb. 1856

"Dear Wife & Children every One You & Watson's letters to the Boys, & myself, of Decem. 30th & Jany. 1st were received by last Mail. * * Salmon & myself are so far on our way home from Missouri; and only reached Mr. Adair's last night. They are all well; & we know of nothing but all are well at the Boys' Shantees. The weather continues very severe;

sent them, as well as you, & Mrs. Perkins, some nice Map

& it is now nearly Six Weeks that the Snow has been almost constantly driven (like dry Sand) by the fierce Winds of Kansas. Mr. Adair has been collecting Ice of late from the Osage river; which is 9½ inches thick, of clear, *sollid* Ice, formed under the Snow. By means of the Sale of our Horse, & Waggon, our present wants are tolerably well met; so that if health is continued to us we shall not probably suffer much. The idea of again visiting those of my dear family at North Elba, is so calculated to *un*Man me that I seldom allow my thoughts to dwell upon it; & I do not think best to write much about it. "Suffice it to say", that God is *abundantly* able to keep both us, & you: *& in him let us all trust*. We have just learned of some *new*, & shocking outrages at Leavenworth; & that the free State people there have fled to Lawrence: which place is again threatened with an attack. *Should* that take place we may soon again be called upon to "buckle on our armor"; which by the help of God we will do; when I suppose Henry, & Oliver will have a chance. *My judgment is*, that we shall have no general disturbance until warmer weather. I have more to say; but not time now to say it. So farewell for this time.

Write Your affectionate Husband & Father
John Brown."

J. B. to his Family at home,

"Osawatamie Kansas Territory 6th Feb. 1856.

"Dear Wife, & Children every One * * * Thermometer on Sunday & Monday, at 28 to 29 below Zero. Ice in the River, in the timber, & under the Snow, 18 Inches thick, *this week*.

On our return to where the Boys live, we found Jas again down with the ague, but he was some bett yesterday. Oliver was also laid up by freezing h Toes, — one great toe so badly frozen that the Na has come off. He will be crippled for some da yet. Owen has one foot some frozen. "We have middling tuff [tough] times (as some would call them;) but have enough to eat; & abundant cause for the most unfeigned gratitude. It is likely th when the Snow goes off such high Water will pre as will render it difficult for Missouri to invade t Territory; so that God by his Elements may protec Kansas for some time yet. ~~I will advise with the~~ * * * Write me as to all your wants for the comi Spring, & Summer. I hope you will all be led to seek God, "with your whole Heart"; & I pray him in mer to be found of you. All Mail communications are entirely cut off here by the Snow drifts; so that we get no news whatever this week." * * *

J. B. to his family at Home.

"Osawatamie, Kansas Territory, 20th Feb, 18

"Dear Wife, & Children; every One Your letter Salmon, Ruth's to Henry, & Ellen, of 6th & 16th Jany; were received by last Week's mail. This week we got neither letter or paper from any of you. I need not continually repeat that we are always glad to hear from you; and to learn of your welfare. I wish that to be fully

Sent them, as well as you, & [illegible], some nice [illegible] understood. Salmon and myself are here again on our way back from Missouri where we have been for Corn: as what the Boys had raised, was used up; Stock & families having to live on it mainly, while it lasted. We had to pay 30 cents pr. Bushel for Corn. Salmon has had the Ague again while we have been gone. * * * I have but little to write this time except to tell you about the weather; & to complain of the almost entire lack of news from the U. States. We are very anxious to know what Congreſs is doing. We hear that Frank Pierce means to crush the men of Kansas. I do not know how well he may succeed; but I think he may find his hands full before it is all over. For a few days the Snow has melted a little; and it begins to seem like early March in Ohio. * * * May God Allmighty bleſs you and all good Friends at North Elba

Your Affectionate Husband & Father, John Brown".

J. B. as before.

"Brown's Station, Kansas T., 7th April, 1856.

"Dear Wife & Children every one * * * Since I wrote last Three letters have been received by the boys from Ruth & Watson dated March 5th & 9th. The general tone of those letters I like exceedingly. We do not want you to borrow trouble about us; but trust us to the care of "Him who feeds the young Ravens when they cry." * * * We have no wars as yet; but we still have abundance of "rumors." We still have frosty nights; but the graſs starts a little. There are none of us complaining much just now: all being able to do something. John has just returned from Topeka not having met with any difficulty; but we hear that preparation are making in the U. S. Court for numerous arre of Free State men. For One I have no desire (all th considered) to have the Slave power cease from its a of aggression. "Their foot shall slide in due time." No more now: May God bless & keep you all.

Your affectionate Husband & Father."

J. B. as before.

"Osawatamie, K. T. 17th April 1856.

"Dear Wife & Children every One I have just ope a letter from Watson to Oliver, & seen one from Ruth to Henry both dated 26th March, by which we learn of you health: and also of your straitened circumstances. must say in regard to the last that while my heart is sor grieved at your trials I think that you are to be blamed for not frankly writing to me more about your situation before you got on to your last loaf of bread: as I might, should have sent you a little help sooner, had I known your real need. * * You may look for something before long. * * * Let me just say that I hope God will inspire you all w some degree of trust, & confidence in Him: & that you may al learn to exercise fortitude in times of darkness & difficulty How do you think I have been enabled to carry my load fo many years? I will answer - "Hitherto the Lord hath been my helper". If you get short again for a small amo of provisions, might you not, Watson, work out a few days & earn a little to keep you along until you can get help fro other sources? "I have been young & now am old: yet hav I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his Seed begging bread

sent them, as well as you, & [illegible], some nice | Ma

May you all learn to cast your cares on God: "for he careth for you". The Committee of Congreſs are said to have arrived in Kansas, & much good it is believed will grow out of their coming. We trust it may be so; but at all events God will take care of his own Cause. The trees begin to leave out a little, & the graſs to grow - which we hope will soon come to visit you; & that Green may in some measure take the place of Blue. Can think of but little more to add but my earnest desire for your happineſs; & the constant ringing in my ears of the despairing cry of Millions whose woes none but God knows. "Bleſs the Lord O my Soul", for he hears."

[The Sack of Lawrence, Kansas, by the U. S. troops & Miſsouri ruffians occurred May 20. 1856. The "Battle of Black Jack, where J. B. and a few men routed a large party of Miſsourians & took their Captain (Pate) prisoner, took place June 2, 1856. The Battle of Osawatomie was on Aug. 30. '56 His son "Frederick was killed at Osawatomie. Henry Thompson wounded at Black Jack.]

John Brown to his Wife.

"Hartford, Conn. 6th March 1857.

"Dear Wife * * I did not pay Saml. Thompson all I had ought to have given him for carrying us out; & wish you would make it up to him, if you can well, out of what I have sent you. * * I shall send you some newspapers soon to let you see what different stories are told of me. None of them tell things as I tell them."

John Brown to His Wife.

"Springfield, Maſs. 31st March 1857.

"Dear Wife Your letter of the 21st is just received. I have only to say as regards the resolution of the boys, to "learn, & practise war no more"; - that it was not at my solicitation that they engaged in it at the first: and that while I may *perhaps* feel no more love of the business than they do, still I think there may be *possibly* in their day that which is more to be *dreaded*; if such things *do not now exist*. * * * I have just got a long letter from Mr. Adair [Kansas]. All middling well March 11th; but had fears of further trouble after a while.

Your Affectionate Husband John Brown."

J. B. to his Family at North Elba.

"Hudson, Ohio, 27th May 1857.

"Dear Wife & Children every One * * * I have got Salmon's letter of the 19th Inst; & am *much obliged* for it. There is some prospect that Owen will go on with me. If I should never return; it is my *particular request* that *no other* monument be used to keep me in remembrance, than the *same plain old one*, that records the death of my Grand Father, & Son: & that *a short story*, like those already on it, be told *of John Brown the 5th*: *under that* of Grand Father. *I think* I have several *good reasons* for this. *I would be glad that my posterity* should *not only remember* their parentage; but *also the cause* they labored in. I do not expect to leave these parts under four or five days; & will try to write again before I go off. I am much confused in mind; & cannot remember what I wish to write. May God abundantly bless you all. * * *

Your affectionate Husband & Father John Brown."

J. B. as before.

"Wassonville, Iowa, 17th July 1857.

"Dear Wife & Children every one Since I last wrote I have made but little progress; having Teams & Waggons to rig up, & load: & getting a horse hurt pretty bad. Still we shall get on just as well, *& as fast* as Providence intends; and I hope we may all be satisfied with that. We hear of but little that is interesting from Kansas. It will be a great privilege to hear from home again: and I would give anything to know that I should be permitted to see you all again in this life. But God's will be done. To his infinite grace I commend you all."

J. B. as before.

"Tabor, Fremont Co., Iowa, 12th Sept. 1857.

"Dear Wife, & Children: every one It is now nearly Two Weeks since I have seen anything from *home*: & about as long since I wrote. * * We get nothing very definite from Kansas yet: but think we shall in the course of another week. * * Got a most kind letter yesterday from Mr. F. B. Sanborn: also one from Mr. B—, where Oliver was living. You probably have but little idea of my anxiety to get letters from *you constantly*: & it would afford me great satisfaction to learn that you all regularly attend to reading your Bibles; & that you are *all punctual* to attend meetings, on Sabbath days. I do not remember ever to have heard any one complain of the time *he had lost*, in that way."

J. B. to his Wife.

"New York, 2d March 1858.

"My Dear Wife I received yours of the 17th Feby. yesterday; was very glad ~~t~~of it; & to know that you had g the $10. safe. I am having a constant series of both grea encouragements, & discouragements: but am yet able to say in view of all "hitherto the Lord hath helped me". I shall send Salmon something as soon as I can; & will try to get you the articles you mention. I find a much more earnest feeling among the colored people than ever before: but th is by no means universal. On the whole, the language of Providence to me would certainly seem to say try on. I flatter myself that I may be able to go & see you again before a great while; but I may not be able. I long to see you all. * * May God abundantly bless you all. No one writes me but you."

J. B. to his family at North Elba.

"Tabor, Iowa, 10th Feby. 1859.

"Dear Wife; & Children, All I am once more in Iowa through the great Mercy of God. Those with me, & other friend are well. I hope soon to be at a point where I can learn of your welfare; & perhaps send you something beside my good wishes. I suppose you get the common news. May the God of my Fathers be your God." [No signature.]

[The above is the entire letter. His company was the Eleven Slaves whom he brought from Missouri to Canada safely.]

Ms. B.1.6 v.1, p.7